# THE OBSERVER.

BY BEATRICE IRONSIDE.

*The friend of Socrates, the friend of Plato,*
*But above all, the friend of truth.*

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## VALERIA; OR THE GHOST ALIVE!

I was quartered in a small town of Languedoc, when I received an invitation from a friend to pass the Christmas holidays at an old castle built on the rocks of the Cevennes. Young ladies, officers, and amiable neighbours, composed our cheerful society, and good nature and confidence enlivened our circle. What pleasures we enjoyed! none sought to shine exclusively, and all were satisfied. Various amusements employed the whole of the day; in the evening we gathered around a blazing fire, each related a tale, and as our young ladies were very fond of the marvellous, ghosts and apparitions were the common topicks of our conversation. The season, the place, the hour, augmented the terrifick effect of those relations; the nights were long and dark; the country buried in snow, and the owls, ancient inhabitants of the crumbling towers, answered each other from the old battlements with loud and monotonous cries. As soon as the stories commenced, the circle became by degrees narrower, the hearers drew close to each other and feigned to laugh, while in truth they trembled with fear: and the speaker often seized with a sudden fit of quaking, remained silent and dared not turn his eyes either towards the end of the spacious saloon where he fancied he heard the clanking of chains, or towards the lofty chimney whence he almost expected the ghost to stalk forth.

One of the most amiable members of our society was a young Italian lady called Valeria, who joined to the brilliancy of wit, a mildness and equanimity of temper which nothing could alter; her large black eyes were languid, and her beauty seemed to derive greater charms from the paleness which continually overspread her cheek and even invaded her lips, and when she spoke, it seemed as though a statue of alabaster was becoming animated.

During our terrifick relations Valeria shewed more courage than any of our ladies. She did not seem affected, but listened, smiled, and far from doubting the facts, found them very sim-

ple and natural. We were piqued at her indifference, and once intimated our surprise ; this was her answer :

" I do not wonder, my friends, that such common stories should astonish you, as none of you, perhaps, have ever seen a ghost."

" You have then seen one ?" exclaimed I, hastily, " I have done better," answered she, laughing ; " I have been *one* myself, I am still *one*, and it is a ghost that now addresses you."

At these words we all involuntarily shrunk back, but Valeria, with her soft and irresistible voice, recalled us, bade us resume our seats, and whilst holding each other by the hand we beheld her with terrour, and fancied at every moment we discovered some signs of the other world in her face, she quietly continued her discourse.

It is no fault of mine, my friends, to have died ten years ago ; it is a misfortune to which we are all equally exposed : but what is more extraordinary, I have since that period found myself infinately more happy. It is true that the troubles I experienced during my life, have repaid fully for the happiness I enjoy since my death. It is proper I should relate to you what happened to me until that fortunate instant, and you will then perceive that death alone could ensure me tranquillity in the world.

I was born at Florence, of rich and noble parents, whose only child I was. Proud of his birth, my father lamented every day that he had no son to support his name, and soured by what he thought a disappointment, he thought himself without children because he had no son.

Our palace was contiguous to the house of an old nobleman of small fortune, but much beloved and respected, the Marchese Orsini. He was a widower, and devoted his life to the education of his only son, Octavian. This young man was about my age, and as my father and the old Orsini had served in the same army, they visited each other very frequently, and Octavian was accustomed from his infancy to come familiarly to our house, where my mother loaded him with kindness.

I had not attained the age of fourteen, and Octavian was the chosen friend of my heart ; he was so mild, so handsome, and so amiable that I loved him more ardently than a sister loved her brother. To him I confided my pleasures and my pains, and in return was trusted with all his secrets. Before my father and mother we feigned indifference, seemed entirely occupied with play, and even sometimes quarrelled ; but as soon as we entered the garden, or the small wood at its extremity, we ceased to quarrel and to play. Octavian spoke only of his love, pressed my hands, and often ventured to kiss my lips, swearing he never would have any other wife than Valeria. I made similar promises, and received without blushing his innocent caresses.

One evening my father found us in a dark retired bower; Octavian was at my feet, holding my hands, and as the fear of being overheard made him speak in whispers, our faces almost touched each other. My father's anger equalled our terrour, he commanded me in a terrible voice to return to my mother; I obeyed trembling; and from a distance I heard him reproach Octavian, and forbid him to enter his house again, and I saw the beloved youth leave our palace in tears.

The next day, as my mother sought to appease my father's anger, the old Marchese Orsini was announced. His noble and serious air, his silver locks and august features, inspired me with veneration; I was sent away, and all that came to my knowledge was, that after a long and violent conversation they parted in a passion, and hatred succeeded thirty years of friendship.

My father surrounded me with spies to watch my conduct, and I was not even allowed to go to church. My health was soon impaired, and I should have yielded to the stings of affliction, had not my mother shewn me the most tender attentions and soothing pity.

Time glided away without softening my sufferings, when one evening after supper I took advantage of the absence of my father, to go and pour forth my griefs in the little bower where all my misfortunes commenced. I placed myself on the same turf where I had been seated near Octavian, and bedewed it with my tears. His ardent protestations of love seemed to sound anew in my enchanted ears; I repeated all my former vows; when, on a sudden, a man rushed into the bower and threw himself at my feet. Terrified, I was attempting to fly, but the voice of Octavian made me return.

"Listen to me," said he, "I have but an instant, and it is the last. This night I leave Florence; my father has obtained a company of horse for me in the Imperial army. War with Prussia has begun; I am going to die or deserve your hand. I will signalize myself in the first campaign; the Emperour will desire to see me; I will throw myself at his feet, and declare our love to him. Joseph is young, he surely has a feeling heart, he will speak in my favour to his brother, the Grand Duke; your father will not dare to disobey, and you will be the reward of valour and constancy. I ask no more than a year, Valeria; promise, swear that during that time you will resist the importunities of your father, and at the end of that period I shall be dead, or worthy to become your husband."

I listened breathless and palpitating with love, hope, and fear. I swore eternal fidelity. We agreed to correspond through the means of a servant gained over by Octavian, the same who had given him access to our garden: a rustling noise among the bushes obliged us to separate. I tore myself from

Octavian's arms, and returned to my chamber, where I spent the night in tears.

During the first ten months which followed the departure of my Octavian, I remained in the same situation. My father treated me with the same severity, and my mother with her accustomed tenderness. The servant gave me punctually the letters he received, and each announced new successes. General Laudhon shewed great friendship for Octavian; he made him his aid-de-camp, and promised to raise him to the first rank.

At the end of ten months I ceased all at once to receive news from Octavian; trembling for his life, but secure as to his constancy, I wrote letter upon letter without any answer. I sent the servant to the Marchese Orsini's house, to try adroitly to discover whether any news from him had been received by his father. The answer appeased my fears without lessening my grief. Octavian had written the day before that he enjoyed good health, had been promoted to the rank of colonel, and intended to spend the winter at Vienna with General Laudhon.

At the same period, a cousin of my father's arrived from Germany, and settled him in our house. He was tall and lean, about the age of forty-five or fifty; his complexion was dark, and his features expressed craft and malignity; his disposition was cold and gloomy; he spoke but of his nobility; he had spent his life, and the little good sense he had received from nature, in reading, studying, and learning by heart all the genealogies of Europe.

This cousin, who was the Count Heraldi, on the first evening after his arrival, asked my father in a tone of indifference, whether he knew where Marchese Orsini lived at Florence.... My father frowned, and answered, that he knew nothing of him. "Three weeks ago," rejoined Heraldi, "as I passed through Vienna I dined at the house of General Laudhon, on the day of his daughter's marriage with the son of that Marchese. The young man whom I found very amiable, nnderstanding that I was going to Florence, gave me a letter for his father, and made me promise to describe to his family the pleasures of the marriage feast, and the bliss he enjoys with his bride.

My father frowned again, without answering, and the cruel Heraldi continued to relate how the young lady had fallen in love with Octavian, that the Emperour had deigned to favour the union, and that a regiment had been the dowry of the bride. Notwithstanding my efforts to conceal my emotions, my strength forsook me, and I fell senseless into my mother's arms. A violent fever was the consequence of this unexpected blow. It was long, tedious, and painful, and endangered my life. My mother did not leave me an instant; my father shewed me the most tender attentions, he passed the night by my side, called me his dearest child, and seemed to have restored his heart to

me. This change in his conduct affected me so much, that in a moment of filial tenderness, when he asked me with tears, in his eye, "how his Valeria felt?" I encircled his neck with my arms, and exclaimed, "yes, I am your Valeria; I am your docile child; and the only wish of my heart will always be to fulfil your desires."

These words decided my fate. I had perceived for sometime that my father intended to unite me with Heraldi, and he now declared his intention, without enforcing but imploring my obedience. Octavian was married and faithless, I was indignant against him; I wished to avenge myself by loving another, I consented, and gave my word.

The preparations for my marriage were made with a dreadful celerity. My father redoubled his caresses, Heraldi loaded me with presents....The deed was signed, and I was led to the altar.

With forced indifference I pronounced the painful vow, and after the service left the choir, followed by my family. Heraldi, who could not contain his joy, held my hand, and we slowly marched towards the church door, when, as I advanced to take holy water, I raised my eyes, and beheld a youth, pale and disordered, leaning against a pillar. His eyes were wildly fixed upon me, he approached, and cried, in a faultering voice, "I desired to see you accomplish your horrid crime, Valeria; I have seen it, and am resolved to die!"

He said, and disappeared. I had fainted, I was unconscious of what became of me. Scarcely recovered from a long illness, I relapsed into the most dangerous state. I was continually delirious; the disease rapidly encreased, and after a paroxysm of sixty hours, I experienced a sudden weakness, and expired in my mother's arms. That affectionate parent nearly followed me into the grave; my father was in despair; Heraldi lamented the loss of my fortune, but all in vain. I was folded in a shroud, and carried with great pomp to the family vault in the aisle of the cathedral; my coffin was placed on long iron bars, the stone of the vault was replaced, and I remained in the abode of death.

Wild with despair, and thinking himself my murderer, Octavian formed the project of descending into the vault and terminating his existence on my tomb. The evening of my burial he prevailed, through the power of money, over the sexton of the cathedral to accompany him to the church. Furnished with a dark lanthorn, they raised the stone and descended the steps. As soon as Octavian perceived my bier, he rushed towards it, burst it open, and tearing the veil that covered me, kissed my faded lips.

O! miracle of love! Octavian's soul recalled mine; my mouth, tenderly pressed by his, breathed a sigh; he felt it, clasped me in his arms, tore me from the coffin, pressed and

warmed me on his panting heart; mine awoke to life a second time; I made a slight motion; enraptured with joy, Octavian ascended the steps with his burthen, gained the church door, which the sexton opened, and flew to the house of his father, where I was put to bed, and received every possible assistance.

When I opened my eyes, they met Octavian's fixed with anxious joy upon me; his father was at his side, accompanied by a physician, who answered for my life. I cannot describe what my sensations were: I seemed to wake from a long dream; I was not conscious of my existence, but I knew Octavian; I could not speak to him, but I found pleasure in beholding his features. Three days and three nights scarcely restored me to the use of my faculties; when at last the rest I tasted, and the food I took, made me slowly recover my senses. My recollection returned, I remembered my mother, my marriage, the place where I had seen my lover. I was soon able to listen to Octavian, and to hear from his mouth what had happened to me.... The idea of his inconstancy and marriage rushed upon my weakened imagination, and I mentioned his nuptials with the daughter of Gen. Laudhon. Octavian thought I was delirious; the General had no daughter; Octavian had arrived from the army, he was not a Colonel, nor had he passed through Vienna: but having with difficulty obtained leave of absence, uneasy at receiving no letters from me, he had hastened to Florence, bearing a letter from his General which recommended him to the notice of the Grand Duke. He was alighting when he saw me going to church; he had followed me to the altar, and in his grief had resolved to reproach me with my perjury.

I now understood that Heraldi, in concert with my father, had invented that horrid tale, and intercepted my lover's letters. No crime in my eyes equalled the shameful means which Heraldi had too successfully employed: and I was the wife of that monster? to him I was condemned to consecrate my day! That idea plunged me into despair, I regretted my tomb, and wished myself once more in its peaceful bosom.

"Do not fear, my dear child," said the old Orsini; "I come from the Grand Duke; I gave him myself the letter of our brave Laudhon, and related your history. That generous Prince takes you under his protection: he has written to the Holy Father to have your marriage broken, and have no doubt but it will be annulled. You are dead to Heraldi, you live for Octavian, and religion and justice will know how to defend you against your tyrants. I have one favour to ask of you, which is, that no one may see you, or know our secret, before the courier's return from Rome; your peace, your happiness depend on this precaution."

Hope returned with these words; I promised what was required of me, and swore I would follow his advice. Octavian

was with me. He spoke of his love, of our marriage, and future happiness. My health was fast recovering, and in a few days all that remained of my past sufferings was a paleness which you now perceive...dreadful remains of the tomb which nothing has been able to alter.

At last the time drew near, and the courier was expected to return from Rome, when an extraordinary event nearly overthrew all our designs.

We were in the holy week, and I grieved in secret, not to be able to go to church in those sacred days, when penitence appeases the wrath of a forgiving God. I dared not mention to Octavian the desire of my heart, but I resolved, notwithstanding the dangers that threatened me, to fulfil so sacred a duty.... I took advantage of an instant when I had been left alone, wrapped myself in a large black cloak which concealed my face, and on the Holy Thursday stole out at nine o'clock in the evening. I bent my steps towards the Cathedral, which I found crowded with people; who in profound silence, their eyes bent to the ground, prayed before the altar where the consecrated wafer was deposited. The altar was lighted with a prodigious number of wax candles, while the rest of the edifice was involved in darkness. Concealed behind a pillar I addressed my prayers to the Saviour of the world, and entreated him to watch over her whose only hope was placed in his power and mercy.

Before *I* left the church, *I* felt a great desire of visiting the place where *I* had been buried; but what spectacle struck my sight! *I* perceived my father and my mother kneeling on my tomb; Heraldi in deep mourning stood by my father, who seemed wrapped up in meditation. My mother prayed and shed abundance of tears; *I* gazed on her for some time, when on a sudden *I* saw her lean towards me, lay her hand on the ground, and kiss the cold marble of my sepulchre at the same time she pronounced my name. I could no more restrain my emotions; *I* fixed my lips on her hand, and sobbed aloud.

The veil that concealed my face was drawn aside by the motion, my mother raised her eyes and recognized her daughter; she uttered a loud scream, called upon me, and extended her arms. My father and Heraldi knew me also; the last advanced towards me, and was going to lay his hand upon me; *I* was lost when love inspired me. "Stop," cried *I*, with a voice which *I* endeavoured to render terrible, "respect after her death the woman you deceived during her life. You alone were the cause of my death: fear the just anger of heaven, and repent!"

I said; and while Heraldi, frozen with terrour, listened without daring to move, *I* covered my head with my veil and walked slowly towards the church door. The crowd gave way before me, and *I* gained Orsini's house without having been discovered.

The next day it was publickly reported at Florence, that my ghost had appeared in the Cathedral, and had been seen by a thousand witnesses who knew me. It was added, having pushed my husband with my hand, my fingers had left five fiery marks on his shoulder. Others declared, that *I* came to demand justice and accuse Heraldi of murder. The people murmured against him ; he was followed and insulted, stones were thrown at him, and his life was in danger.

The courier returned at last, and brought the brief from the Pope which annulled my marriage, as contracted by fraud.... The Duke sent for the old Orsini, and agreed with him upon the measures to be adopted ; and the next morning *I* went to the palace, accompanied by Octavian and his father. The Prince received us with great affability ; and when it was announced that, according to his orders, my mother, father, and Heraldi were arrived, he concealed us in a closet, whence *I* heard him address my father in these words :

" Strange means, Sir, have been used to marry your daughter to a man she could not love. Your repentanc has avenged her wrongs, and the tears *I* perceive in your eyes satisfy me *I* have no need of reproaching you with your cruel behaviour towards her. Death has broken those fatal ties ; and if by a miracle, which the people believe, your daughter enjoyed again the light of day, her marriage would be void. Here is the brief of his Holiness, which declares it so ; chuse, then, Count Heraldi, either to begin a law-suit against me, or to sign a renunciation of your fraudulent rights, and depart immediately for Vienna : my protection will follow you there ; and you will restore tranquillity to my capital, where your presence excites disturbance."

Heraldi made his renunciation in the terms dictated by the Grand Duke. Then taking leave of his Imperial Highness left Florence immediately.

" This is not all," said the Grand Duke to my father, " your daughter lives ;" a scream from my mother interrupted him, " you will see her again," continued he, " but your daughter cannot live happy unless she becomes the wife of the young Orsini. *It* is he who tore her from the grave ; it is in his house that she is : gratitude, paternal love, Valeria's fame, compels you to consent to that marriage. *If* my prayer adds weight to those powerful considerations, *I* ask Valeria for Octavian ; he deserves her ; he has obtained the esteem and friendship of General Laudhon. Consent to this happy union, and *I* promise a regiment to your son-in-law, and will obtain for you the order of Maria Theresa."

My father did not hesitate an instant ; and my mother, bathed in tears, asked to see her darling child. *I* could not wait any longer, but opened the door and rushed into my mother's arms. The joy of my parents was as violent as their sorrow

had been ; they pressed me to their hearts, and loaded with caresses Octavian and his father.

We all threw ourselves at the feet of the Grand Duke, and were at a loss for words to express our gratitude. My nuptials were celebrated in his palace ; and since that moment *I* have endeavoured to please my husband, and the venerable Orsini, who loves me as his own daughter. My father restored me to his love, and my days have glided away embellished by friendship, love, and gratitude ; and *I* give thanks to heaven, for having withdrawn me for a short while from the world, that *I* might enjoy uninterrupted happiness.

FOR THE OBSERVER.

## DOCTOR CRAWFORD'S THEORY,

### AND AN APPLICATION OF IT TO THE TREATMENT OF DISEASES.

*(Continued from p. 203.)*

*I* suggested in the last number, the advantages that might result from repeating the experiments made by Kircher, for discovering the noxious properties which exist in the air during the prevalence of epidemicks. *I* sincerely hope it will be long before an opportunity offers for engaging in similar enquiries, but if it should offer, nothing could contribute more to the elucidation of a subject which is not more obscure than it is interesting. Most of the following may be made at any time, but are all illustrative of the position advanced.

EXPERIMENT 1st.

Take a piece of flesh and expose it to the air during a moonlight night, in a moist situation, until morning. *It* will then be found putrid, and if examined by a good microscope, to abound with worms of various sizes. Some will have so increased as to be discoverable by a keen naked eye. This evinces the multitudes of flies which must then fill the air, from which alone such worms could be derived.

EXPERIMENT 2d.

He proposes to cut a serpent into small pieces, macerate these in rain water, and afterwards expose them to a warm sun..... They are then to be buried in the earth for a day and a night ; in removing, and examining them with a microscope, he asserts that innumerable little serpents will be discovered. *It* is now well known that these animals are, in common with most others, propagated from an egg ; if therefore this learned investigator were not deceived, he must, by the means he employed, have subjected the ova of a female to incubation, and thus procured a race which he believed to have sprung from a very different source. The equivocal generation which was then generally received, has been long universally exploded.

EXPERIMENT 3d.

Mathiolus, Fuschius, and other botanists, have shewn us that sage, before it is washed, has very noxious qualities. Mizaldus informs us that he has known it, when eaten incautiously, occasion sudden death. Our ingenious investigator traced the cause of this evil to its origin. He thus relates the process he pursued. "Whilst *I* examined the leaves of this plant with a microscope, *I* perceived a peculiar roughness on the external surface of the leaves, having some resemblance to a cobweb.... Within this there appeared very minute insects on which they were continually at work. These must be injurious to those that swallow them. *If* the leaves were wiped with the finger, or washed with water, the insects were no longer discoverable."

The appearance of sage as it grows, and of many other plants, frequently gives countenance to such results, and if, when so examined, they exhibit like phenomena, we cannot wonder at the derangements which so often attend the use of them.

EXPERIMENT 4th.

*If* the dust of rotten wood be examined with a microscope, it will be often seen to contain an immense crowd of insects, some are furnished with horns, and some have wings. The eyes of some of them, like black points are discernable, and some are furnished with a proboscis. The great Creator does not manifest his power so much in the construction of the largest, as of the smallest animals. Multitudes are so minute as not to be visible except by the aid of the most powerful glasses, yet they are each of them possessed of the requisite members, without which, indeed, they could not move, or perform any of the functions of life. When the whole body is so minute as to be only visible when highly magnified, how much more so must be the eggs from whence it proceeds! How minute the heart, stomach, muscles, nerves and articulations! none of these can be wanting where life exists. There is no animal visible to the naked eye smaller than a mite. *It* resembles only a white point, under a microscope, it appears to be covered with hair, and in shape not unlike a bear.

EXPERIMENT 5th.

Fill a phial with equal parts of earth and water, shake it well, and place it in a situation where the strongest sun may shine upon it; let it remain there until the water begins to putrify. When this commences, bubbles will soon after arise, and if some of the fluid is examined with a microscope, it will be found almost wholly animated. The various gambols, and evolutions, quick as lightning, which these insects exhibit, will strike the eye of the beholders with amazement. When they have arrived at maturity, they migrate from their humid abode, and becoming gnats, and such like flies, impregnate the air with the means of destruction to men and other animals.

The following is a curious specimen of the credulity of mankind, and of the avidity with which causes are received, to account for effects attended with a general and injurious influence. The mind must have a cause, but in such cases a very slight enquiry suffices, an operation is often admitted which is destitute of proof, and indeed it not seldom happens, that the more improbable it be, it is the more readily adopted. Kircher's assertions often partake of the marvelous, and are therefore, to many, proportionably acceptable. He has here doubtless, mixed truth with falsehood, probabilities with improbabilities. He remarks that plagues differ from each other in their symptoms, according to the differences in their nature, and the varieties in the bodies they attack. Thus it happens in the gout, many suffering more especially in the feet, others in the knees, others in the loins, and others in the hands. Some experience a nausea and vomiting, when a fever commonly attends. Pestiferous vapours are known to have issued from the earth, they are also communicated through the medium of the air and water. On some occasions, the eyes alone are infected, on others the throat and its appendages. Mercurialis asserts, that a plague arose in Venice, in 1617, from the following cause. *In* consequence of long continued rains, the fields were covered with mud, and this afterwards was cloathed with an unsubstantial grass. The cattle that fed upon it contracted affections of the throat, which terminated in death by suffocation.... The common people eat these dead animals without apprehension, but were destroyed in the same manner. From thence it spread to Naples, where sixty thousand infants became a sacrifice, the cause evidently preferring objects in that state. The same Mercurialis describes another plague that affected the feet, the legs, and especially the mouth, proving destructive in three days. He affirms that a similar disease happened in Jerusalem, attended with a similar mortality. He notices the sweating sickness that prevailed in England. This began in 1483, and was very fatal. He refers also to the plague of Athens, in which the bowels more particularly suffered. Inflammations of the lungs terminating in suffocation, are frequently conspicuous traits of this disorder. Historians describe a plague at Valentia, in Spain, in 1648, where shoemakers were at first the only sufferers; afterwards those who bought the shoes, and thus it crept on until it raged all over the kingdom. The cause of this calamity occasioned much dispute amongst the physicians. At length it was discovered *that an Algerine vessel had arrived with sole leather, the plague at that time desolating Africa,* WHICH HAD THUS DISSEMINATED THE MEANS OF DESTRUCTION. He reports from Campanella an account of a plague that had ravaged Sicily, by *merchandize imported from Africa into Messina.* He speaks also of a plague that suddenly and most unexpectedly broke out at Milan. *It* first attacked *a grave digger, from whom*

*it spread all over the city, proving fatal to fifty thousand persons....* When the origin of this dreadful calamity was PROPERLY investigated, it was found that a cord which LAY BEHIND AN OLD CHEST, *used at interments about twenty years before, during the prevalence of a similar affliction, had been again employed for the same purpose,* AND THUS REPRODUCED THE SAME DESTRUCTION.

All this cannot assuredly be read by men of a sober mind, with the same conviction that appears in our reverend author. It is curious to observe how strongly the controversy was maintained by the medical men, respecting the plague at Valentia, in 1648, and how quickly it was terminated, when traced to the leather, brought necessarily long before, from Africa. We cannot be surprised at the state of ignorance in which we still are, whilst conjectures as unfounded as these, continue to be received, and sanctified with all the reverence due to the most authentick proof. We shall never have a comprehension of the source of our afflictions, until the mind becomes satisfied that a knowledge of it cannot be acquired in any other way than such as appertains to every branch of intellectual pursuit, and that no proof is to be admitted, which would be rejected on any other important occasion. Would such proofs as are above adduced, be tolerated in any other concern of life? Would measures so deeply involving our best interests, have a single advocate, in any other object of our attention, if not more rationally supported than any of the allegations above produced, can possibly afford? To awaken men to doubt, to determine them never to countenance the admission of mere conjectures as proof, is my great aim. Never to give any credit to the authority of names however eminent, in whose works it is proposed in one part, that certain opinions are probably correct, and which in another are made the foundations of practice, as if established on the most irrefragable proofs. These are restrictions from which the prosecutors of medical science should never depart, and which it shall be my unceasing endeavour to inculcate.

[*To be continued*] J. C.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE.

We have been favoured by the goodness of a friend in London, with some very valuable periodical publications, some of them of so recent a date as the month of July...they contain much interesting matter, from which we shall make such selections as will contribute to the amusement of our readers. The following extract from a *Retrospect of Literature from the commencement of the present century, merits attention.*

### POLITICAL ECONOMY.

By far the most important work that has appeared in this branch of science, within the period to which we confine our re-

trospect, and, indeed, the most masterly work on the subject, which exists in this or any other language, is Mr. Malthu's "*Essay on the Principles of Population.*" As this is a book which has excited much attention both in this country and on the Continent, we shall endeavour to give our readers such an abstract of its general features, as will enable them to form their own judgment of its excellence. In an enquiry concerning the future improvement of society, concerning which the French philosophers, and some of our own countrymen have written so largely, Mr. Malthus remarks, that the mode of conducting the subject which naturally presents itself is, first, an investigation of the causes that have hitherto impeded the progress of mankind towards happines; and, secondly, an examination into the probability of the total or partial removal of those causes in future. *The great cause,* according to Mr. Malthus's hypothesis, *is the tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment prepared for its support.*

Man, in common with all animals and plants, is excited by a powerful instinct to increase his species; and if the germs of animal and vegetable existence contained in this spot of earth had ample room for expansion, and ample food for subsistence, millions of worlds would be filled in the space of a few thousand years, with animal and vegetable existencies. But this natural fecundity is repressed by want of nourishment; and that it must ever be so repressed, will appear from a comparison of the two rules of increase, that of the productions of the earth under the most favourable circumstances of human industry, and that of the increase of population, when left to exert itself with perfect freedom. Mr. Malthus pronounces that population, when unchecked, goes on doubling itself every twenty-five years, and thus increases in a geometrical ratio. The rate, according to which the production of the earth may be supposed to increase, it will not be so easy to determine; when acre has been added to acre, till all the fertile land is occupied, the yearly increase of food must depend upon the amelioration of the land already in possession. "This is a stream," says Mr. Malthus, "which, from the nature of all soils, instead of in-"creasing, must be gradually diminishing. But population, "could it be supplied with food, would go on with unexhaust-"ed vigour, and the increase of one period would furnish the "powers of a greater increase to the next, and this without any "limit." Pursuing his chain of argument, Mr. Malthus says, "Let it be granted, that by the best possible policy, and by "great encouragement to agriculture, the average produce of "Great-Britain, for instance, might be doubled, together with "its population, in the first twenty-five years. Population goes "on uninterruptedly, and in the second twenty-five years, be-"comes quadrupled. But can it be supposed, that by any sys-"tem of policy and encouragement, the produce of the soil of

"Great-Britain could also be quadrupled in the second twenty-
"five years? On the contrary, is it not an almost self-evident
"proposition, that in proportion, as the cultivation is extended,
"the addition that could yearly be made to the former average
"produce must be gradually and regularly diminishing?" Mr. Malthus, however, to give the advantage ground to his opponents, concedes that the yearly additions which might be made to the former average produce, instead of decreasing, as they certainly would do, would remain the same; that is to say, that the produce of this island might be increased every twenty-five years by a quantity equal to what it at present produces. "The
"most enthusiastick speculator," says he, "cannot suppose a
"greater increase than this: in a few centuries it would make
"every acre of land like a garden. Apply this to the whole
"earth; allow that its produce shall every twenty-five years
"be increased by a quantity equal to what it at present produ-
"ces, and this will be supposing a rate of increase much greater
"than we can imagine any possible exertions of mankind could
"make it. The means of subsistence, therefore, under the most
"favourable circumstances, cannot possibly be made to increase
"faster than in an *arithmetical* ratio, while human population,
"under the most favourable circumstances, would increase in a
"*geometrical* ratio."

"The necessary effect of these two different rates of in-
"crease," says Mr. Malthus, "when brought together will be
"very striking. Let us call the population of this island eleven
"millions; and suppose the present produce equal to the easy
"support of such a number. In the first twenty-five years the
"population would be twenty-two millions; and the food be-
"ing also doubled, the means of subsistance would be equal to
"this increase. In the next twenty-five years the population
"would be forty-four millions, and the means of subsistence only
"equal to the support of thirty-three millions. In the next
"period the population would be eighty-eight millions, and the
"means of subsistence just equal to the support of half that
"number. And at the conclusion of the first century, the po-
"pulation would be a hundred and seventy-six millions, and
"the means of subsistence only equal to the support of forty-
"five millions, leaving a population of a hundred and twenty-
"one millions totally unprovided for.

"Taking the whole earth, instead of this island, emigration
"of course would be excluded; and supposing the present po-
"pulation equal to a thousand millions, the human species would
"increase as 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, and subsistence as
"1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. In two centuries the population would
"be to the means of subsistence as 259, to 9, and in two thou-
"sand years the difference would be almost incalculable. In
"this supposition no limits whatever are placed to the produce of
"the earth. It may increase for ever, and be greater than any
"assignable quantity; yet still the power of population being

"in every period so much superiour, the increase of the human "species can only be kept down to the level of the means of sub- "sistence, by the constant operation of the strong law of neces- "sity acting as a check upon the greater power."

[*To be continued.*]

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FOR THE OBSERVER.

## *THE COMET.*

It is eight days since a comet has been visible to the naked eye, towards the west, and although since that time, it has been sensibly raised above the horizon, and that from the close of day till about 8 o'clock, it has been daily remarked by numberless persons; yet until now, when this paper goes to press, no one in our city has given the publick the slightest information relative to its position, its movements, its nature or magnitude. In a maritime country, this circumstance, however trifling it may appear in itself, is really to be lamented; since it so strikingly proves how indifferent we are to the cultivation of the sciences; how little we reflect upon their application to the common occasions of life, and how completely they are as yet exoticks in Baltimore, since at the time of the eclipse of the sun, in many other parts of the United States, every thing that concerned it was minutely observed, and reported to the publick. We might here be permitted to reiterate a wish we have already expressed, because the present instance evidently shews its importance. It is, that we could see established among us, academies of science and the fine arts, which founded and supported by the state, might correspond with each other and with their associates; in a country yet young, where the scarcity of establishments and the increase of fortunes, bear no proportion with the progress of luxury; it is very evident that too many domestick cares must occupy the minds of people in general, that too little superfluous money remains in the hands of individuals, to render it possible for each town to defray the cost of such establishments; the expence of instruments and the *salaries* which are *necessary* to attract distinguished professors and to form pupils to important knowledge; for it is impossible to carry any science to perfection without making it an exclusive occupation. Partial efforts can rarely produce great results. The insulating system which proceeds from the *abuse of* federalism, already presents a striking obstacle to the erection of any great civil or military establishments; since should it be proposed to establish one for instance, in Baltimore; Boston, Charleston, or New-Orleans, would take no more interest in it than if it were in China; and Philadelphia would with regret contribute a single cent to it, because it would not be within its walls. What I observe here with regard to states is equally applicable to the towns of same state; propose to raise an observatory, a fort, or any publick edifice whatever, at Annapolis we'll suppose, with what coldness Baltimore or Frede-

ricktown would second the project. If on the contrary, Congress extending its views in proportion to the aggrandizement of the nation, and the progress of the mind of man, traced out a great plan, that its members prevailed on their constituents to make some little sacrifices to the execution of it, reunited from all parts of the union two or three important national establishments might be formed from the produce of these small but numerous offerings which would infinitely exceed any generous efforts which a few spirited individuals might make.

A noble emulation would arise amongst these academies :.., Natives as well as strangers finding fixed points where to seek instruction, where they might communicate their discoveries, and reap the honours they might deserve, would find their advantage in devoting themselves entirely to such subjects and giving them the importance they merit ; argument and criticism would draw forth the powers of genius, in giving play and spring to the imagination : thirst for distinction would excite the individual to make researches and sacrifices which he never would have undertaken without this impulsion, and which would be a new tribute he would offer to the publick cause.

We hazard these observations which are submitted to the consideration of those of our fellow citizens who, really patriotick, know also how to appreciate, to what a degree the improvement of human knowledge must operate not only on the glory of the nation, but also on the advancement of agriculture and commerce : for as Virgil has so well expressed it :

Nor must the ploughman less observe the skies,
When the kids, dragon, and Arcturus rise,
Than sailors homeward bent who cut their way
Thro' Helle's stormy streights. * * * * * *

## TRANSLATION FROM MOSCHUS.

O'er the smooth main when scarce a zephyr blows
To break the dark-blue Ocean's deep repose,
I seek the calmness of the breathing shore,
Delighted with the fields and woods no more.
But when, white foaming, heave the deeps on high,
Swells the black storm, and mingle sea and sky,
Trembling, I fly the wild tempestuous strand,
And seek the close recesses of the land.
Sweet are the sounds that murmur through the wood
While rolling storms upheave the dangerous flood ;
Then, if the winds more fiercely howl, they rouse
But sweeter musick in the pine's tall boughs.
Hard is the life the weary fisher finds
Who trusts his floating mansion to the winds,
Whose daily food the fickle sea maintains,
Unchanging labour, and uncertain gains.
Be mine soft sleep, beneath the spreading shade
Of some broad leafy plane inglorious laid,
Lull'd by a fountain's fall, that, murmuring near,
Sooths, not alarms, the toil-worn labourer's ear.